

M E R I D I A N



Teaching the Rules - For Better Management and Instruction

[Susan Osborne](#)

[College of Education & Psychology](#)
[North Carolina State University](#)

[M. Megan Ambrogi](#)

Self Employed Behavior Specialist Consultant

Image obtained from IMSI's Master Photos Collection, 1895 Francisco Blvd. East, San Rafael, CA 94901-5506, USA.

"I don't want to quit but I feel like I'm not doing any good. It's just a constant battle."

Abstract

In this article, we describe a project to improve classroom behavior and academic functioning in a middle school special education class of students with learning and behavior problems. A first year special education teacher walked into a language arts class several months into the school year to find students performing poorly and engaging in disruptive behavior. Students arrived late and unprepared for class. Some students simply refused to engage in any academic work. Others engaged in verbal and physical aggression against their peers. We describe how we planned and implemented a proactive program to teach students how to behave appropriately and how to improve their academic skills in language arts. We explicitly taught and reinforced students for coming to class prepared, listening to the person speaking, raising their hands to be recognized, and doing their best work. Students responded positively to the intervention and improved both their school behavior and their academic productivity.

Teaching the Rules - For Better Management and Instruction

"My language arts class is a mess," Ms. Allen, a first year teacher who had taken over a class mid-year, recently told me. "Some of the students don't like each other and they disrupt the class. They aren't interested in doing the work so half of them are failing. I find myself raising my voice and they don't even care. I don't want to quit but I feel like I'm not doing any good. It's just a constant battle."

Although these students had been pulled together in a class because they had disabilities that affected their ability to function



Image obtained from PhotoDisc TM,
Copyright 1996.

in school, I've heard the same concerns from teachers of "typical" students as well. In fact, difficulty with classroom management is one of the biggest challenges teachers face (Walker & Sylwester, 1998) -- and it contributes to stress that may influence teachers' decisions to leave the field (Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999; Whitaker, 2000).

Many teachers in general and special education are not well prepared to manage disruptive behavior. In special education, preservice behavioral intervention projects often focus on the needs of a individual rather than a group. Opportunities to develop and implement management plans during field placements are further limited because we try to place student interns with effective teachers who have already established good classroom order. The purpose of this paper is to describe our efforts to establish better order and improve academic engagement for 10 students attending a middle school language arts class for students with behavior and learning problems.

Why We Need to Teach Classroom Rules

"Because students can recite school rules, and perhaps even give examples of good school behavior, does not mean that they actually know how to behave in ways that are acceptable (Nelson, Crabtree, Marchand-Martella, & Martella, 1998)."

All too often, teachers in general and special education assume that by the time students reach middle school, they will know what appropriate school behavior is and be able to practice it with only occasional reminders. In fact, as Kameenui and Darch (1995) make clear, even middle and high school teachers often must proactively teach the skills necessary for students to behave appropriately. Because students can recite school rules, and perhaps even give examples of good school behavior, does not mean that they actually know how to behave in ways that are acceptable (Nelson, Crabtree, Marchand-Martella, & Martella, 1998). In this article, we will describe how we actively and directly taught students what we meant by rules like coming to class prepared and waiting to be recognized. We will show you how to use proactive management techniques to teach and reinforce the academic and behavior skills we want students to exhibit.

 [To Page 2 of 10](#)

M E R I D I A N

Teaching the Rules

The Classroom

Image obtained from IMSI's Master Photos Collection, 1895 Francisco Blvd. East, San Rafael, CA 94901-5506, USA.

Ms. Allen's class was a special middle school language arts class for students with disabilities. The ten students assigned to the class had a range of disabilities that would strain most teachers' management practices. One student had impaired vision and required special seating and specially prepared assignments. Another student had Asperger Syndrome (often described as high functioning autism), others had a variety of learning and behavioral problems that included noncompliance, defiance, and aggression. Students ranged in age from 12 to 15. Some students ignored each other while others traded insults and, occasionally, worse. All students were performing well below grade level in reading and written language. When I observed Ms. Allen's classroom, she was focusing primarily on written language skills while reviewing grammar and relating specific elements of grammar to the students' written work.

"The bell rang and Ms. Allen stepped into the doorway to check assignment books as third period students left and to greet the fourth period students as they arrived."

When I first observed in Ms. Allen's class, I took my place in a corner of the class before the fourth period students entered the room. Four classroom rules that the students had helped to generate were posted prominently at the front of the class:

- Raise your hand to be recognized
- Listen to the person speaking
- Come to class prepared, and
- Do your best work

Seats were arranged in pairs or groups so that all students could see the board and a "word wall" that the class had established along one side.

Student Behavior

The bell rang and Ms. Allen stepped into the doorway to check assignment books as third period students left and to greet the fourth period students as they arrived. Students entered the room noisily, roamed around collecting work materials, and complaining that they could not find books or homework. Some chatted with Ms. Allen for a few moments as they entered or talked to peers. Some asked for locker or hall passes which Ms. Allen denied.

During this time, Ms. Allen exhorted her students to find their work folders, sit down, and begin the warm up exercise she had placed on the board. She reminded students of the class rules, closed the door when all the students had entered the room, and

encouraged students to finish the warm up exercise so they could begin class. Students continued to talk among themselves even raising their voices from time to time to call to a peer across the room. Two students followed directions to begin work. Five or six were sporadically engaged in their academic work and the others made no attempt to rewrite and correct the sentences she had assigned as a warm-up. Two students traded threats and others contributed to the argument. Class continued in this fashion with constant reminders to pay attention, raise hands, and so on.

Students' Academic Skills

It was quickly apparent to me that the students had only rudimentary understanding of the instructional content. Ms. Allen's "review" of adjectives mystified the students as did the complicated lesson on verb tenses she presented. The materials that had been adopted by the school were clearly too advanced and too complicated for these students to use successfully. In other words, there was a mismatch between the students' present levels of functioning and the instructional materials. Most of the students responded by carrying on with their own activities.

 [To Page 3 of 10](#)

| [Download .pdf file of this entire article \(Acrobat Reader needed for viewing\)](#) |

Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal
a service of NC State University, Raleigh, NC
Volume 4, Issue 1, Winter 2001
ISSN 1097 -9778
URL: <http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2001/rules/rules2.htm>
[contact Meridian](#)
All rights reserved by the author.

| [Table of Contents](#) | [Review Board](#) | [Resources](#) | [Archive](#) |

Setting New Behavior Goals

"...we had to adapt the instruction and materials to the students' present levels of functioning. "

Later, during Ms. Allen's lunch period, she and I discussed the class, her frustrations, and her goals for the students. First, a large fraction of her instructional time was occupied with responding to student misbehavior and the tone of the class was largely negative. Second, students often were not engaged in the academic work and did not complete work independently with any degree of success. Several students did not even attempt the work. Together, we identified three general goals:

- Decrease disruptions
- Increase engaged academic time
- Improve academic outcomes

We realized that we could not improve academic outcomes without increasing time on task and that increasing time on task required changing the academic environment in two ways. First, we needed to decrease student disruption so Ms. Allen could teach, and second, we needed to revise the instructional activities to ensure that each student could be successful. In other words, we had to adapt the instruction and materials to the students' present levels of functioning.

We also decided to institute a new point system that would make desirable behavior more salient to the students. We would directly teach students the behavior they needed in order to follow the classroom rules. In other words, we would show them exactly what it meant to come to class prepared, to wait to be recognized, and so on. We would provide immediate feedback and we would highlight positive behavior. We also decided to use the physical arrangement of the classroom to support our goals. Instead of allowing students to sit where they pleased, we assigned seats. Students would be required to sit in assigned seats unless they earned the privilege to sit somewhere of their choice.

Because we determined that it was important to achieve substantial changes in school department quickly, I (author Osborne) became an active participant in the project. To get the students' attention, I taught the class the following day while Ms. Allen recorded points. I assigned points for following rules; engaging in academic tasks, and being polite or helpful to another student or a teacher.

In preparation for the class, I made name cards for each student's



Image obtained from PhotoDisc TM,
Copyright 1996.

desk identifying him or her as Miss Smith or Mr. Lopez and Ms. Allen and I devised a seating plan. Using last names and honorifics was a small change but it served to get students' attention and to model the respect we expected them to display to others. I put a very simple warm up exercise on the board. **(Today we are reviewing adjectives. The baby was cute. Make this more interesting by using better adjectives. You can earn one point for using a better adjective.)** And we placed students' work folders on their desks until we could teach them to get their folders quietly and quickly.

I met students at the door and directed them to find their new seats and start the warm up exercise. As students sat down, I began assigning points saying **"Point for Ms. Davis for finding her seat quickly and sitting down, point for Mr. Smith, he has his paper and pencil out."** Of course, the students did not understand the significance of the points or my role in the class. As soon as all the students were in the room, I introduced myself and Ms. Allen and I explained the system. Students could earn points for following the rules; for polite and helpful behavior and for doing their work. We awarded points, for example, when a student got to work quickly on an independent assignment or participated appropriately in a class discussion. We reviewed each rule, and had students give examples and non-examples of each one.

 [To Page 4 of 10](#)

| [Download .pdf file of this entire article \(Acrobat Reader needed for viewing\)](#) |

Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal
a service of NC State University, Raleigh, NC
Volume 4, Issue 1, Winter 2001
ISSN 1097-9778
URL: <http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2001/rules/rules3.htm>
[contact Meridian](#)
All rights reserved by the author.

| [Table of Contents](#) | [Review Board](#) | [Resources](#) | [Archive](#) |

M E R I D I A N

Teaching the Rules

"We taught each rule in the same way by specifying and practicing the behavior that constituted following the rule. "

Come to class prepared was an easy rule to teach. We operationalized the rule this way: Being prepared for class means that you bring your book, a pen or pencil, and paper. It also means that you are in your assigned seat when the bell rings. You can earn points for having your book, writing implement, paper, and for being in your seat. I held up one finger as I named each item. Mr. Lopez, what is an easy way to earn four points? Mr. Lopez earned a point for listening to the speaker because he could tell me what I had said. As you see, we operationalized "listening to the speaker" by saying that listening to the speaker meant being able to tell what the speaker said.

We taught each rule in the same way by specifying and practicing the behavior that constituted following the rule. We demonstrated the point system by assigning points to students who raised their hands, listened to the speaker, and so on. We also explained that students would not get points every time they followed a rule, nor would they ever get points when they asked for a point or argued when another student received a point.

For each ten points, the students earned a ticket with his or her name on it. All tickets went into a big jar from which a single ticket was drawn during the last period of each day. The ticket could be exchanged for privileges like serving as the point recorder the next day, earning additional computer time for the whole class, conducting the ticket drawing, sitting near a friend, or hearing an extra chapter of a book Mrs. Allen was reading aloud to the class. We spent about five minutes at the end of the class discussing privileges and asking the students for suggestions of appropriate privileges to add to the menu. Note that the privileges cost nothing and were directly related to the successful operation of the class.

Increasing the Pace of Instruction

In order to create more opportunities for students to respond successfully to academic material during class, we introduced procedures called every-student-response. For brief periods of drill and practice scheduled throughout the class, we prepared laminated cards with "YES" on one side and "NO" on the other. These sessions allowed us to practice content while practicing and reinforcing classroom deportment (i.e. listening to the speaker and waiting to be recognized).

A drill session went something like this:

Teacher: O.K. What have we been reviewing?

Everyone?

Students reply: "Adjectives"

Teacher: Adjectives. Right. We're going to practice. Get out your response cards. I'm going to say a word and then say it in a sentence. You show me if it is an adjective. Yes or no. Point for Miss Ellison. She's ready to go.

Teacher: Monstrous. We had a monstrous snowfall last winter. Is monstrous an adjective? Yes or no? Everyone? Make sure your answer is towards me. The students hold up cards showing their answers.

Teacher: Right monstrous tells us about what? Everyone?

Students: Snowfall.

Teacher: Mr. Savage can you tell us what monstrous means?

Mr. Savage: Well, I guess like a monster? It must be big 'cause we got an awful lot of snow.

Teacher: Good thinking! Point for Mr. Savage for a good answer.

Teacher: Brilliant. Brilliant sunshine dispelled the gloom after three rainy days. Is brilliant an adjective? Everyone?

Teacher, after four or five minutes of practice: O.K. class. How did we do on our practice? Did everyone listen to the speakers? Did people do their best work? Use your cards.

Some students started to respond orally and then quickly held up YES cards.

Teacher: Well I think so too. Ms. Osborne, a point for everyone for working hard, waiting to be recognized, and listening to the speaker.

 [To Page 5 of 10](#)

| [Download .pdf file of this entire article \(Acrobat Reader needed for viewing\)](#) |

Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal
a service of NC State University, Raleigh, NC
Volume 4, Issue 1, Winter 2001
ISSN 1097 -9778
URL:<http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2001/rules/rules4.htm>
[contact Meridian](#)
All rights reserved by the author.

Modifying and Assignments

"When teachers assign work students cannot do, they are not only wasting valuable instructional time, they are increasing the likelihood that frustrated students will become disruptive. "

Students in special education classes as well as many other students in general education are routinely given instruction and assignments for which they are not prepared. Although teachers receive strong pressure to "cover" materials in preparation for high stakes tests, what Cecil Mercer (Mercer & Mercer, 2001) terms the "spray and pray" approach to teaching content is not effective. When students do not have the necessary preskills to complete a task successfully, whether it is answering an oral question in class, solving an arithmetic problem, or answering a question about the content of a chapter in history, assigning the task has no educational value. What students learn from such assignments is to avoid the task. Many students quickly decide that it is easier and less damaging to their self-esteem to say "I won't" than "I can't." When teachers assign work students cannot do, they are not only wasting valuable instructional time, they are increasing the likelihood that frustrated students will become disruptive.

In this particular language arts class, many of the students did not have the knowledge necessary to do much of the assigned work. As a result, Ms. Allen and I reevaluated the curriculum, taking in to account the goals specified on students' Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), which are required for each student receiving special education services. All students had goals related to improving written language but the materials used by other seventh grade language arts classes were not appropriate for most of these students. The materials introduced too many ideas at once, did not provide sufficient practice, and rarely used non-examples to show students the limits of a particular concept. Furthermore, many explanations presumed more extensive knowledge than our students had. We clearly needed to determine students' levels of knowledge and revise or devise our own materials for student practice.

Our first and second day of this project, we reviewed nouns and adjectives. Students had a good grasp of nouns so we quickly moved on to describing them, beginning with the warm up exercise. I told the students that I thought the sentence "**the baby is cute,**" was boring. What could we say to make it more interesting and more related to that particular baby at that particular time? One student, intending to be a wise guy, offered "smelly." I quickly reinforced his raised hand and his contribution and asked students to raise their hands and make other suggestions. The group collaborated to come up with a more complicated sentence: **The fussy baby was smelly and needed**

to have her diaper changed. Together with the students, we generated a list of adjectives we thought might be attractive to middle schoolers. Look at [Appendix A](#) to see some of the adjectives that the students wanted to include on the word wall.

Ms. Allen turned the class's attention to a poster of a mountain climber on a peak and asked the class to generate adjectives that described the picture. Snowy, rocky, blue, scary were suggestions. I offered cobalt to describe the sky and perilous to describe the climb. We modeled complimenting students on their contributions and prompted them to do the same. New words went up on the word wall and students began to try out the new vocabulary in their writing. Finally, we gave the class a story starter about mountain climbing and asked them to write at least two sentences.

On the third day of the project, most students arrived for class prepared and on time and began the warm up activity without prompting. Ms. Allen began to reteach verbs. The material other classes used to teach and practice verb tenses provided scanty review of present, past, and future tenses and quickly moved on to perfect and imperfect tenses. Our students needed to review the definition of a verb and the role verbs play in writing complete sentences. We needed to devote considerable practice to recognizing the three basic tenses (past, present, and future) and using the appropriate tense in their writing. We also needed to address the concept of irregular verb tenses. (See [Appendix B](#) for some of the materials we developed for instruction and practice on verb tenses.) During instruction, students could earn points for raising their hands to be recognized, giving thoughtful answers, and being able to tell what another speaker had contributed to the discussion.

After the warm up exercise using adjectives (like enormous and putrid) to rewrite a boring sentence, Ms. Allen conducted the lesson reviewing verbs using a combination of oral and written exercises that students completed individually and as a group. I taught the winner of the previous day's drawing to record the points Ms. Allen awarded for each student on the simple form we had developed. The student placed a hash mark for each point in the first block. When that block held ten points, the recorder moved to the next block as you can see in the example that appears in [Appendix C](#).

Students took the responsibility of being recorder seriously and worked hard to be accurate. As far as we could tell, no student abused his or her position in order to assign undeserved points to friends or withhold points from others. We conducted occasional reliability checks when one of us, or a teacher assistant, independently recorded points and then compared them with the student tally. Although there were a few discrepancies, they

"Students took the responsibility of being recorder seriously and worked hard to be accurate. As far as we could tell, no student abused his or her position in order to assign undeserved points to friends or withhold points from others."



Image obtained from IMSI's Master Photos Collection, 1895 Francisco Blvd. East, San Rafael, CA 94901-5506, USA.

"Classroom climate improved when Ms. Allen took a proactive approach and actively taught her students how she wanted them to behave."

Links to Useful References

[LD Online](#)

[LD In Depth \(Technology\)](#)

[Article by Dr. Tamara Ashton](#)

[Review of Inspiration Software](#)

[Case Studies about Word Prediction Software](#)

Project Outcomes

Although we did not collect formal data on time on task, student productivity, or numbers of student disruptions, we have some observations and anecdotes to share. Classroom climate improved when Ms. Allen took a proactive approach and actively taught her students how she wanted them to behave. Students acted like engaged students and their academic productivity increased. After two days, students got to work on the warm up activity quickly and, more importantly, they wrote more and better in-class stories and essays. Suddenly, students were writing independently for 20 minutes of the period -- and without pleadings or threats from the teacher. Students raised their hands to ask an adult or a peer how to spell a word or looked to the word wall for the perfect word. Except for this and the occasional mutterings of students reading a paragraph or sentence to themselves, the room was quiet during the writing activity.

On the third day, one student asked if he could continue the previous day's story instead of starting a new one. We encouraged him to continue his story, a multi-chapter tale about aliens who land a space ship in his back yard. Another student asked if she could stay in from recess to continue a story she had begun that morning.

Students began to treat each other better as well. Another student proudly told us how he had responded to a nasty comment about his heritage from a "regular education" student. "And I didn't hit him!" he told us proudly, "I told him he was just ignorant and walked off."

Incorporating Educational Technology

Although our primary purpose with this study was to improve student behavior so that more and better instruction could occur, we believe that instruction could have been further enhanced with the selective use of appropriate educational technology. Had there been sufficient computers available in the classroom (**there was only one**) or had Ms. Allen been able to schedule regular periods in the computer laboratory, instruction in written expression could have incorporated software that assists students in planning, organizing, and producing their written work. The students in this class generally enjoyed using computers for educational activities as evidenced by their suggestion that extra time in the computer lab be available as an earned privilege. While some students used that time for educational games such as Oregon Trail (2000), two students selected computer time to work on their journals.

In addition to providing reinforcement for appropriate behavior and addressing district mandates for student technology competence, computers can provide unique tools for students to build or improve a host of important academic skills. For example, keyboard skills enable students to use word processing capabilities along with spell and grammar checks to produce cleaner, neater, and more accurate

products that are easier to edit, share with peers, and grade. Many students with and without disabilities, however, will need direct instruction in using these tools. The web site www.ldonline.org provides extensive information about educational technology appropriate for students with disabilities including articles about making the best use of such tools. An article by Dr. Tamarah Ashton, for example, presents a strategy to help students use spell checkers more effectively (www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/ashton_spellcheck.html).

Specialized software such as that produced by Inspiration, Software Inc., can help students develop writing as a process that incorporates prewriting activities like brainstorming, planning and organizing using story or concept maps, or refining sequence using outlines. The ability provided by some software to use symbols as well as text may be especially helpful to students with language-based disabilities. A review of Inspiration software also appears at www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/inspiration.html.

Readily available software could have been used to organize and display student progress in following the rules and increasing academic productivity. A better use of graphing software would have been to incorporate lessons in making and interpreting graphs as part of our project. Middle school students could easily have used graphing software such as Excel (Microsoft) to graph their own data each day. Displays of data could have been used to discuss student progress and set new goals for behavior and academic productivity as well as to teach graphing and interpretation of graphed information. Self-graphing has been widely used as a component of behavior and academic interventions that incorporate self-monitoring (Trammel, Schloss, & Alper, 1994), an effective and important aspect of self-control training widely used with students with special education needs. If we had incorporated self-graphing for all students, we would have taught students to (a) enter their own data (number of points earned) daily, (b) to graph the data in different ways, (c) to share their progress with parents or others, (d) to evaluate their progress over time, and (e) to set goals for themselves in conference with the teacher.



Image obtained from IMSI's Master Photos Collection, 1895 Francisco Blvd. East, San Rafael, CA 94901-5506, USA.

More specialized hardware and software, often called assistive technology, can enable students with disabilities to participate more fully in the general education program. Voice recognition software which "types" from dictation, originally developed for people with limited ability to use their hands or poor keyboarding skills, can assist the student with spelling deficits, and fine motor problems that limit keyboard skills. Until recently, the time and effort required to "train" the software, limitations in handling accents and specialized vocabulary, and overall accuracy in interpreting the spoken word have limited the regular use of such software. More recently software such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking (Dragon,) , and IBM ViaVoice have made the use of such software a reality for many students. Again, reviews of voice recognition software can be found

in the assistive technology section at www.ldonline.org. Another boon for students who find writing difficult is word prediction software. Students can type the first few letters of a word and the software will present likely words from which the student can choose. Because word prediction software reduces the number of keystrokes required and provides assistance with spelling, it can speed up the writing process for students who have physical or learning disabilities that impact their ability to write efficiently. Several case studies by teachers who have used word prediction software Co:Writer 4000 (Don Johnson, Inc.) with students are available online at <http://www2.edc.org/ncip/library/wp/toc.htm>.

Many if not most school districts around the country have experts on assistive technology available to help students and their teachers identify, secure, and use specialized technology for students with a wide range of disabilities. In our experience, these individuals are eager to help teachers find specialized technology or to identify readily available alternatives.

"Can technology help the teacher manage effective instruction in academics and appropriate behavior?"

Conclusions

Ms. Allen's classroom was a much more pleasant place by the end of the week. Of course, these changes came at some cost. Having a second adult in the class to record points was clearly an advantage that is not available to every teacher, although paraprofessionals, classroom volunteers, and students can easily be taught to be good record keepers.

Identifying or developing course materials that match students' instructional levels requires teacher time and skill. Teaching at a faster pace is associated with greater task engagement and increases correct responses from students but also demands more energy from the teacher and, at least initially, much more detailed planning and preparation.

Can technology help the teacher manage effective instruction in academics and appropriate behavior? We believe that it can and that the technology itself can enhance learning of critical content (**graphing, for example**) and self-management. Although we did not incorporate a technology component in this project, we would do so in the future. We believe it would facilitate effective instruction of the content material and discussion of student progress and goal setting.

Is the effort to teach basic classroom deportment worthwhile? Again, we believe it is. Teaching rules for good student behavior and embedding them in appropriate content instruction can liberate teachers from the stress of responding to cycles of negative behavior and enable them to teach. Students who are successfully engaged in academic activity and who understand and comply with classroom rules experience less frustration and are less likely to engage in disruptive behavior. As teachers, we can liberate students, those with and without disabilities, from habits of poor behavior and enable them to become active and successful learners who can take legitimate pride in their performance

About the Authors:

Susan Osborne

Susan Osborne earned her doctorate in special education at the University of Virginia following several years working in special education with pupils who had physical, cognitive, and behavioral disabilities. She has served as director of a federal grant to develop models for serving students with learning disabilities in the general education program. Presently she coordinates the Graduate Program in Special Education at North Carolina State University and directs a project to evaluate software designed to teach language, safety, and social skills to students with autism. You can reach her at susan_osborne@ncsu.edu.

Mary Megan Ambroggi

Megan Ambroggi received her BA degree from Villanova University in Psychology in May, 1997. She received her M.Ed. from NC State University in Special Education with a concentration in Learning Disabilities in December, 1999. While researching this article Megan was a teacher of a self contained classroom in the Wake County Public School System in Wake County, North Carolina. Currently she is employed in Pennsylvania as a Behavioral Specialist Consultant working with children with severe behavior problems. This position utilizes wraparound services that involves creating and implementing Behavior Plans that function across all settings. You can reach her at mmgoethals@hotmail.com.

References

Kameenui, E. J. & Darch, C B. (1995). Instructional classroom management: A proactive approach to behavior management. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Mercer, C. D. & Mercer, A. R. (2001). Teaching students with learning problems(6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Miller, M. D., Brownell, M. T., & Smith, S. W. (1999). Factors that predict teachers staying in, leaving, or transferring from the special education classroom. Exceptional Children, 65, 201 - 218.

Nelson, J. R., Crabtree, M., Marchand-Martella, N., & Martella, R. (1998). Teaching good behavior in the whole school. Teaching Exceptional Children, 30 (4), 4 - 9.

Trammel, D. L., Schloss, P. J., & Alper, S. (1994). Using

self-recording, evaluation, and graphing to increase completion of homework assignments. Learning Disability Quarterly, 27, 75 - 81.

Walker, H. M. & Sylwester, R. (1998). Reducing students' refusal and resistance. Teaching Exceptional Children, 30(6), 52 - 58.

Whitaker, S. D. (2000). What do first-year special education teachers need? Teaching Exceptional Children, 33(1), 28 - 36.

Software References

Co:Writer 4000 [Computer software]. (1992 - 1995) Volo, IL: Don Johnson.

Dragon Naturallyspeaking [Computer software]. (2000). Flanders, Belgium: Dragon Systems, Inc.

IBM ViaVoice [Computer software]. (2000). Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.

Inspiration [Computer software]. (1997). Portland, OR: Inspiration Software, Inc.

Microsoft Excel 97 [Computer software]. (1997). Redmond, WA: Microsoft.

Oregon Trail, 4th ed. [Computer software]. (2000). Novato, CA: The Learning Company.

 [To Page 8 of 10](#)

| [Download .pdf file of this entire article \(Acrobat Reader needed for viewing\)](#) |

Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal
a service of NC State University, Raleigh, NC
Volume 4, Issue 1, Winter 2001
ISSN 1097-9778
URL: <http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2001/rules/rules7.htm>
[contact Meridian](#)
All rights reserved by the author.

| [Table of Contents](#) | [Review Board](#) | [Resources](#) | [Archive](#) |

Appendix A: Powerful Adjectives Generated During a Class-wide Brainstorming (Activity)

Some Powerful Adjectives:

Crabby
Rosy
Experienced
Messy
Bruised
Gory
Putrid
Cobalt
Gloomy
Jagged
Cantankerous

[Back to article.](#)

 [To Page 9 of 10](#)

| [Download .pdf file of this entire article \(Acrobat Reader needed for viewing\)](#) |

Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal
a service of NC State University, Raleigh, NC
Volume 4, Issue 1, Winter 2001
ISSN 1097-9778
URL: <http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2001/rules/rules8.htm>
[contact Meridian](#)

Appendix B: Classroom and Homework Materials for Reviewing Verb Tenses

Activity I. Instruction and review of verbs: What are verbs? (Verbs are action words, tell us about something we do.)

I read books.
Jerry walks his dog every afternoon.
Elise eats breakfast before she dresses for school.

Call on students to give examples of sentences and other students to identify the verbs. Verbs can also tell us about a state of being. Example: **to like**.

Sentences must have verbs to be complete. Are these words verbs? Use your response cards:

Run
Sail
Fly
Wrestle
Climb
Dive
Wait

Point out that some words can be verbs or nouns depending on how they are used (e.g. SAIL, DIVE)

Give me an example of a verb. (Call on individual students.)

Verbs have a property called tense. Tense tells us when something happens.

What does tense tell us? We will study 3 tenses: Present tense, past tense, future tense

- **Present tense: something that happens now.** (Ask for examples)
- **Past tense: something that already happened. To make the past tense, we usually add -ed.**
Yesterday, I played baseball at recess. Past tense: (? Ask for examples)
- **There are also irregular verbs.**
For example, we don't say Cheryl winned that game. We say Cheryl what the game?
Roger has a cold. **Make that past tense.** Last week, Roger _____ .
- **Future tense tells about something that will happen.** I will be 13 on my next birthday.
When I am 16, I will get my driver's license. To say the future tense we usually add the word "will." Future tense: Give me an example (call on individual students)

Activity II. Checking for understanding using classroom practice with response cards:

Tell me if I have the right verb tense. Use your response cards:

1. Last night I will go the movie. Is this right? Yes or no.

2. In language arts, we study verbs.
 3. Tomorrow after school I played soccer.
-

Activity III. Independent practice. Introduce work sheet. Circulate while students do it.

Verb Tense Review

The verb tense tells us when something happened. We will study three tenses: **present, past, and future.**

When something happens now, we use the present tense.

Example: I walk my dog every day.

When something already happened, we use past tense.

Example: I walked my dog before school this morning.

When something will happen in the future, we use future tense.

Example: When I get home from school, I will walk my dog.

Notice that the verb changes when we change the tense. Usually we add -ed to make the past tense of a verb.

Write the past tense of the following verbs:

To call _____

To play _____

To bellow _____

To cook _____

Irregular verbs do not add -ed to form the past tense.

Write the irregular past tense of the verbs in the following sentences.

Yesterday, I _____ all the way to Adam's house.
(to run)

I _____ a picture of Darth Vader on my notebook.
(to draw)

After dinner last night, I _____ the dishes.
(to do)

When we use the **future tense**, we usually add **will** to the present tense: I will walk my dog after school. Write the future tense of the verb in the following sentences.

I _____ tuba in the band next year.
(to play)

Women's soccer _____ the next big sports craze.
(to be)

Cheryl _____ her horse on the weekend, if it is not too wet.
(to ride)

Activity IV. Follow up classroom practice:

I am going to give you some sentences and I will call on you to tell me what the verb is and tense I use.

1. The more points you accumulate, the more chances you will have to win the raffle.
 2. I will fly to California next summer.
 3. My family enjoys the beach.
 4. When our dog was a puppy, she chewed the rugs.
 5. I had my birthday last month.
 6. Next month will be warmer.
 7. I eat lunch during fifth period.
-

Activity V. Introduce homework.

Homework

Name: _____

Write a sentence for each verb in each tense. For numbers 2 and 3, you will need to choose a verb.

Example

Verb: ---to bellow

Present tense: _____

Past tense: _____

1. **Verb:** _____

Present tense: _____

Past tense: _____

Future tense: _____

2. **Verb:** _____

Present tense: _____

Past tense: _____

Future tense: _____

[Back to article.](#)

 [To Page 10 of 10](#)

Appendix C: Point Sheet for Language Arts Period 4

Recorder: _____ Date: _____

Name	Points			Total	Tickets
Bates	### ###	###		15	1
Ellison	### ###	### //		17	1
Faulkner	### ///			8	0
Gomez	Ab				
Klein	### ###	////		13	1
Lopez	### ###	### ###	### ///	28	2
Savage	### ###	### ###	###	25	2
Singh	### ###	### ###	///	23	2
Thew	Recorder				
Walker	### ###	////		14	1

[Back to article.](#) [To Page 1 of 10](#)